

Judge Bars Hill Bid for Wiretap Data

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A federal judge yesterday issued a permanent injunction forbidding a House subcommittee from subpoenaing telephone company records of the government's national security wiretaps conducted without warrants.

U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch supported President Ford, who sought the court's help after deciding it would be an "unacceptable" risk to allow the subcommittee to have the "sensitive" records of surveillances of foreign espionage agents, double agents and U.S. informants.

The House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, headed by Rep. John Moss, (D-Calif.), subpoenaed the records from the American Telephone and Telegraph Co.

The subcommittee argued they were needed to investigate whether the administration complies with a law saying wiretaps must involve foreign intelligence if they are to be imposed without court warrants.

Gasch pointed out that Mr. Ford did offer "background records," instead of copies of FBI letters to the telephone company requesting leased lines to use in surveillance of specific targets named by addresses and telephone numbers.